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## LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL IN JAPAN IN RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL REUNIFICATION AND PEACE DECLARATION OF THE CHURCHES OF KOREA

We, the members of the Central Committee of the National Christian Council in Japan send our warm greetings and love in the Lord Jesus Christ to our brothers and sisters of the National Council of Churches in Korea.

We are indeed deeply moved by your "Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification and Peace," and would like to send our great appreciation for your having sent a copy of the declaration to us.

While reflecting on the sins of Japan committed against your country and people over the last century, we have come to fully understand that we are not worthy to respond to the declaration; however, if you will allow us, we ask to be granted the privilege of speaking our minds and hearts in love.

Immediately after the promulgation of the Japan - Korea Amity Treaty (otherwise known as the Kanghwa Do Treaty) of 1876, Japan's actions in relation to Korea became blatant, to say the least. Every year from that point on Japan established military bases in your country as strategic staging areas from which to supply the planned invasion of the Chinese mainland. The Japanese government of that period took advantage of the land and property of the Korean people. Through the annexation of Korea, Japan negated completely the traditions and culture of the Korean people due to the chauvinism of Japan's military and assimilation policies. In said manner the dignity of the Korean people

was covered but not crushed by the violence perpetrated by the Japanese nation. In relation to what Japan had and has done to your people, we can only confess again and again our sins of duplicity against you, which can never be recompensed. We confess our many sins and can only ask your forgiveness.

The Japanese churches did not resist Japanese government policies in relation to the 1910 annexation of Korea to Japan, the suppression of the March 1, 1919 Independence Movement of the Korean people, and the massacre of Koreans in Japan at the time of the great Kanto earthquake in 1923. Rather the churches of Japan stood on the side of the Japanese government, cooperated in the enforcement of countless policies of oppression such as taking away lands from Korean farmers, taking harvested rice from Korean farmers, bringing the people of Korea to Japan as indentured labor, forcing the people of Korea to worship the emperor of Japan at Shinto shrines, forcing your people to commit themselves to ultimate loyalty to the emperor of Japan, forcing the Korean people to change their names to Japanese names, and prohibiting the use of the Korean language. We are recoiled by the extreme depths of our sins and ask your forgiveness.

Moreover, we are discovering that our sins are not only those of past seasons but even today, very many Japanese people have not made any attempt to overcome imbedded systems of discrimination against your people living among us in Japan. A much more honest and contrite understanding of our past and present sins must become a central agenda for the people of Japan and as such become a cardinal task for today. The struggle related to the deeply dehumanizing problems of the Alien Registration Law is one specific example of the many tasks that are before us.



We are fully aware of the fact that the divisions between North and South Korea are a direct result of the Japan's colonial policies. After World War II, negotiations between the USA and the USSR over the future of Japan's defunct colonial empire resulted in a divided Korean peninsula. This division was even more deeply imbedded and institutionalized as a result of the cold war confrontations between East and West. Political control over the lives of the Korean people being waged by the two super-powers resulted in even more entrenched divisions which trampled on the wishes of the Korean people, ignoring your pain, grief, and cries for unification.

The Japanese nation was not content to withhold direct involvement in Korean affairs by simply observing the Korean situation, but quite to the contrary, Japan made every effort to profit commercially and economically from the divisions between North and South. It is a well known fact that the deep pain and suffering inflicted on the people of Korea by the economic and political violence of the Korean War is the fundamental basis upon which Japan's economic recovery and excesses are based. It is no exaggeration to say that the economic prosperity of Japan is built on the sacrifices of your people.

In 1965 Japan intentionally concluded the Japan - Korea Treaty by ignoring the reality of the North. Through the provisions of the treaty Japan has once again attempted to gain economic advantage over South Korea to an extent that is even greater than in the colonial period. Because of the treaty, Koreans residing in Japan are divided by the invisible lines of national loyalty even while living in the same country. The Japanese government is more discriminatory toward Koreans who identify with the North, and this only increases the tensions and division between the Korean people living in Japan. The people of Japan, most definitely including the churches, have not seen fit to protest against this situation.

Voluntary efforts on the part of Koreans in Japan seeking unification for the homeland have been constantly threatened by intervention from both the governments of the North and South and as a result many of these movements have collapsed. Many

Koreans who grew up in Japan, and who fervently desired the unification of the Korean people, are still languishing in your prisons as political prisoners. They are the victims of these divisions.

The divisions of the South and North have sundered the hearts and minds of the people in your country as well as your people living in Japan. The divisions have torn families, fellowship between peoples, and life together. The conceptual reality of a living God is violated and manipulated. We cannot help but feel great pain in relation to these problems which are caused by the divisions, but also we realize our deep culpability in regards to the many causes.

The signs of history are moving toward peace and unification of your land as the will and strength of your peoples are moving forward. We believe that the declaration on unification promulgated by the National Council of Churches in Korea certainly increases the power and magnitude of these movements today.

We have learned greatly from sisters and brothers in Christ in your country, as we have been taught to seek peace that is independent of nationality and pursue unification of all peoples based on the Gospel. The great efforts expended in the creation of the theology of the "Minjung" have been a guiding light as we also have been seeking ways to follow Jesus Christ.

The declaration moves the reader with the power of a sword that pierces home to the very marrow of one's being. We are thankful for the great opportunity to be taught by the declaration. Every line in the declaration is a confession of faith on the part of Christians in South Korea, and as such, demonstrates clearly the courageous footsteps taken by followers in Christ; witnessing to the Lord's words and to the light of the Gospel in these very difficult times and circumstances.

The National Christian Council in Japan is in full support of the Declaration and hopes to participate with you in overcoming divisions through committing churches and Christian organizations in Japan and the world over to ever greater involvement in these issues.



The churches in Japan are small in number and numbers, but we are making every effort to seek a just peace in this world so as to embolden our hope for the wholeness of life in God's created order. In relation to the declaration, the following areas of concern are laid upon us as our obligations for action from this day forward.

1. As you indicated in the declaration it is a painful reality that militarism is on the increase in North-eastern Asia. Our hope is to eliminate all military forces from Asia and the Pacific. Especially we seek a determined elimination of nuclear weapons. The military connections between Japan, Korea, and the USA do not guarantee the security of Korea and Japan, but rather intensify the tensions between South and North Korea.
2. In concert with the efforts being expended for the unification of Korea, it is our responsibility to struggle for the strengthening of human rights for all Koreans living in Japan, who, as the victims of the divisions between South and North must be assured the elimination of discrimination against them on the part of the Japanese government and people, so as to bring about a genuine democracy in Japan. We seek to expedite the immediate release of political prisoners of Korean nationality who languish in Korean prisons and thereby encourage true democracy in Korea.
3. With every persistence it is our responsibility to demand of the Japanese government that its diplomatic policies based on the old colonial mentality and warped sense of historicity as seen in many government officials, be corrected, and that further efforts are made to address the grievances of the Asian victims of World War II so as to establish genuine friendship with neighboring countries in Asia.
4. The National Christian Council in Japan supports wholeheartedly the efforts for the unification of Korea being initiated by people in your

country and by your people in Japan. Koreans living in Japan, being victims of the divisions between North and South, are afforded the possibility of contributing their efforts to overcoming the division of their homeland. The National Christian Council in Japan will make efforts to nurture such among our Korean brothers and sisters living in Japan.

With the Christians of the South and the North, we commit ourselves to walking in the Lord's way as we seek out every possibility for becoming servants in Christ. We sincerely hope that the brothers and sisters of the National Council of Churches in South Korea will accept our prayers. May God's blessings be upon the work of the churches of North and South Korea and on our solidarity with you.

May 12, 1988

Rev. Kentaro Takeuchi, Moderator  
Rev. Munetoshi Maejima, General Secretary  
For the Central Committee of the  
NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL IN JAPAN

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#### CONSULTATION ON PEACE AND JUSTICE IN KOREA

-by Liann Ainsworth

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The International Christian Consultation on Peace and Justice in Korea was held at the Songdo Beach Hotel in Incheon, Korea. It brought together 320 participants from over 17 different countries; youth, women, clergy and laity. The event was sponsored by the National Council of Churches of Korea and co-sponsored by the Christian Conference of Asia and the World Council of Churches Commission on International Affairs.

Unfortunately not all the expected participants were in attendance. There were fourteen people who were refused entry into Korea. This number included all the expected participants from the Eastern European countries and four from Japan: NCC/J General Secretary Rev. Munetoshi Maejima, Kyodan General Secretary Rev. Masaaki Nakajima, Rev. Tsutomu Shoji and



Professor Mikio Sumiya, who was intended to be one of the consultations keynote speakers.

Keynote addresses were: **"Liberations Bound Together: US Responsibility and the Work of the Churches in Relation to Korea"** by Ms. Patricia Patterson of the United Methodist Church, USA; **"The Theology of Reunification; A Korean Theology of the Cross and Resurrection"** by Dr. David-Kwang-Sun Suh, professor, Ehwa Women's University; **"Human Consequences of the Inter-Korean Impasse: A Christian Perspective"** by Dr. Han-Shik Park, professor, University of Georgia USA; and **"What Kind of Peace? Confidence Building in the East-West Conflict and the Tasks for the Churches"** by Dr. Wolfgang Huber, professor, Heidelberg University.

In addition to these presentations the consultation included question and answer periods, worship service, Bible study, small-group discussions, a cultural festival and a **Festival of Faith for Peace** held at the Pachon Chaeil Methodist Church; Dr. Emilio Castro and Bishop Kim Ji-Kil preached to the over 3,000 in attendance.

The Consultation participants strongly affirmed the NCKK **"Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Unification and Peace"**. One of the proposals put forth was a proclamation made by the Korean churches establishing 1995 as a "Jubilee Year".

"The jubilee year is a time during which the covenant community of unity and peace is restored through the establishing of shalom based upon God's justice." As the Korean churches prepare for 1995 they will "carry forward a vigorous church renewal movement aimed toward peace and reunification."

The consultation participants committed themselves to strengthening church solidarity worldwide toward the realization of the goals set down in the declaration; and reaffirmed the responsibility of the ecumenical community to expand and strengthen their contacts with the North Korean christian community.

It was their belief that the NCKK declara-

tion "lays an important foundation for the fostering of trust and the breaking down of dividing walls." The consultation itself was perceived by many to be a significant turning point in the history of a divided Korea - setting a new course on the road to reunification.

The participants concluded their message by affirming that "...God is still alive and working in the history of the Korean people. As we believe that the resurrection follows the pain of the cross, so we are determined to trust that the long years of suffering will bring for the Korean people the dawning of a new era of shalom within a reunified nation."

#### YOUTH AND PEACE WITH JUSTICE

Following a long day of discussion and presentations the ecumenical youth representatives to **The International Christian Consultation on Peace and Justice in Korea**, began meetings of their own, often lasting late into the night. The purpose of these gatherings was to discuss the day's events and analyze the substance and significance of discussions in the context of youth concerns. Perhaps to many the youth did not appear as a strong force in the consultation itself but it is important to understand their sensitivity, dedication and concerns within the context of the consultation and beyond.

They perceive their role as that of a generating force, ensuring that the dialogue of reunification is advanced and that the NCKK declaration does not just stop at being a declaration, but rather proceeds as a reunification movement.

During the first meeting it was suggested that the youth need to be wary of their inhibitions; because of the Confucian influence in Korean society young people have a tendency to feel uncomfortable speaking up in front of a large group of "elders". The need to overcome this was stressed. As active participants of the conference they saw it as their responsibility to raise new issues, further challenging the dialogue. It was thought that many of the "ministers" in attendance might not, under the circumstances, voice opinions deviating from the mainstream discussion; with that in mind the youth



felt they should take it upon themselves to articulate positions that others may have hesitated to bring forward. The assumption being that youth have greater freedom in relation to their elders in that they are less accountable to organizations and institutions.

It seemed to be the consensus of the group that the youth's role should not be to provoke actions which negate in any way the basic objectives of the NCKC declaration. Although there are problems and points of contention with the declaration the effort should be supported and looked upon as a significant step toward the goal of reunification.

Although the youth feel that the greatest responsibility for the national division lies with the United States, the Korean people must also share that responsibility and understand that the task of overcoming the division lies with the Korean people. They view the problem as "arising in the context of the relationship between an imperialistic state and a neocolonial nation" and make clear that the "Minjung" are the subjects of the movement. They assert that there can be no peace without reunification.

The tasks which they set forth in their statement include: a call to action on the issue of separated families; ensuring some form of participation for North Korea in the Olympic Games, as a symbol of a unifying spirit; a proposal for a peace and reunification period beginning June 25th and a call to work toward a nuclear free Asia.

As an American among the group I felt that acceptance was gradual. Yet it seems that part of the challenge in efforts to represent the "other American voice" is knowing that one will probably never be perceived as being fully separate - nor is that a realistic expectation. At the final gathering (a party like atmosphere) a particular protest song, with the boisterous refrain: "Yankee Go Home", was repeated over and over. At once I felt both the challenge of the burden, while at the same time being embraced by this caring community of peers; who took care to assure me that I was excluded from the meaning of this refrain.

The ecumenical youth statement, which was presented at the consultation, concluded with the following words: "...in the 44th year of aspiring for reunification". This both serves as a reminder of history and signifies a look forward to a goal waiting to be achieved.

The ecumenical youth participants instilled confidence, through their intensity and tireless vitality, that the challenge would be met.

### PEACE WITH JUSTICE CONSULTATION WOMEN'S FORUM

The women's forum of the **International Consultation on Justice and Peace in Korea** was held on April 24-25 at the Songdo Beach Hotel in Incheon, Korea. Its focus was unification and church women, bringing together over 100 women from 17 different countries. It served as an important gathering not only for the fellowship and opportunity to share information and concerns but also as an opportunity to unify the voices of women in preparation for the larger consultation.

One sensed a feeling of solidarity among the women. It's the kind of unifying feeling that evolves through shared knowledge and mutual understanding. Although there were many women representing varied backgrounds they found common ground not only in their sensitivity and concern for peace and reunification but also as women who bring very special gifts to their roles as peacemakers and unifiers.

Beautiful multi-colored shawls were distributed among those at the women's forum. They were used in the worship service and worn by many throughout the meeting. The shawl became a symbol of the women's solidarity; this carried over to the larger consultation as many continued to wear them, thus further signifying to all that the women brought a special message.

The Women's Forum unanimously endorsed the **"Declaration of Korean Women Theologians on the Peace and Unification of the Korean People"**. This document stressed the need to understand that "women suffer from a double structure of oppression, exploitation and alienation as a result of patriarchal ideology". It is this patriarchal



culture of domination which created the national division and continues to reinforce it. Therefore reunification would be a move toward resolving the sufferings of women in Korea.

The dependency of the South Korean government on American military and economic aid contributes to maintaining the divided condition. This creates a situation which the government perceives as requiring the restriction of freedom, and necessitating actions which serve to maintain the conservative social structure. This impedes progress toward a democracy which values equality and freedom, thus sustaining an authoritarian political structure which continues to deprive women of their basic rights. Within this context of oppression it was declared that "women 'Minjung' are the very subjects of national reunification" and that the "realization of national reunification should move in the direction of dismantling the patriarchal ideology".

Korean women constitute two-thirds of the church population yet they are not equally represented in church leadership which is overwhelmingly male. Therefore the women called for the liberation of the church; for it to become renewed as a democratic and open body in which women are given equal representation; rather than an institution attributing religious authority to men only. It is in this sense that the church reflects the society at large and must address its institutional division in order to more effectively pursue the issue of democratization.

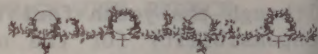
The Women's Forum endorsed the NCKK "Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification and Peace". Among the tasks they chose to pursue were:

- 1) "-to urge a special emphasis on the Korean unification issue during the Ecumenical Decade for Churches in Solidarity with Women;"
- 2) "-to establish a monthly 'hour of prayer' or 'day of prayer' for reunification;"
- 3) "-to hold a meeting of north and south Korean women in a neutral third country, through the help of ecumeni-

cal church bodies, perhaps the WCC;"

- 4) "-and to urge our governments to move positively to support peace and reunification in Korea."

There's a quiet sense of assurance in knowing that your problems and concerns are not yours alone but shared among a community of women. I think that in this context the women's forum generated a kind of resolve which carried its agenda to the main conference with a sureness of purpose. This conviction was evident in the sensitivity and awareness that went into ensuring that women's concerns were brought to the forefront of the discussion on reunification.



### "Japayuki"

#### ASIAN MIGRANT WORKERS CONSULTATION

-by Kevin Uchida

The "Japayuki" has become a pervasive presence difficult to ignore or will away. Forced out of the Philippines by the worsening economic crisis, Filipino migrant workers come to Japan in a desperate bid to overcome their poverty. It is this condition that makes the idea of sexual and economic exploitation, possible arrest and deportation a bearable risk for illegally recruited migrants. The number of migrants who will attempt entry to Japan is expected to increase, as well as the severity of the problems confronting them.

Clearly, there is a need to respond to the social, legal, pastoral and medical problems faced by the Japayuki. Various groups have already initiated action, which range from providing shelter to escaping Japayuki, pushing for workmen's compensation to Sunday English mass and get-togethers. Given the complexity of the situation and the danger involved, however, there is greater need for cohesive and coordinated action. Only by collective action will there be a more effective force in responding to the Japayuki's needs and problems.

The National Consultation on the Japayuki was held April 30 and May 1 at the Nation-



1 Women's Education Center in Saitama under the theme - Japayuki: Towards a common Strategy of Action. Sponsored by the Resource Center for Philippine Concerns (RCPC), an information and networking center based in Tokyo, the consultation brought together 109 people representing 41 organizations nationwide. They came to discuss the situation of the Filipino immigrants and migrant workers in Japan and to chart out a unified plan of action in response to this issue.

The first day was devoted to presentations by the four guest speakers as well as small group sharing of experiences and programs. The following day focused primarily on drafting an official program of action.

Speakers Cynthia N. Lumera, Aurora J. De Dios and La Rainne Sarmiento were invited from the Philippines to discuss the social and economic situation of the Philippines in relation to the migrant worker issue while Yayori Matsui covered the Japanese perspective. In addition, Liza Go, project coordinator of RCPC's Migrant Women's Program, presented her preliminary field report and two Filipinos related their experiences in Japan.

Antonio, a former day-laborer at a construction site, broke his leg in a work-related accident. At first, he was not treated for his injuries because the Shacho (foreman) feared disclosure that the company was using undocumented labor. With the help of a Japanese labor group, he was finally able to obtain medical compensation from the construction company.

Thelma is an immigrant bride whose marriage to a Japanese farmer was arranged through a broker. It is not uncommon for such arrangements to cost upwards of 2 million yen, almost all of which is pocketed by the broker. She was not prepared for the difficulties due to language, culture, and environment which confronted her upon arrival at her new home in an isolated rural town.

A 10 point Program of Action, as well as a Statement of Unity, was realized from the consultation.

-In this endeavor, we realize the need for strengthening and better coordinating the cooperative work between the concerned groups in the two countries in order to maximize the impact of such work at both the policy-making and grassroots levels.

Therefore, we commit ourselves to the cause of Philippine migrants in Japan and to continued study and action oriented towards building a just, equal, and humane relationship between the Philippines and Japan.-

(excerpt - Statement of Unity)

1-20h

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## ASIA SUNDAY

-by Kevin Uchida

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Asia Sunday, an annual ecumenical celebration sponsored by the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), was observed in Christian Churches throughout Asia on May 15. The theme of CCA's coming 1989 mission conference - **The Mission of God in the Context of the Suffering and Struggling Peoples of Asia**, was the focus of this year's Asia Sunday. Because Easter marked the beginning of the World Council of Churches' (WCC) **Ecumenical Decade for Churches in Solidarity With Women**, this year's Asia Sunday also focused particularly on the struggles of Asian women.

George Ninan, Associate General Secretary of CCA, visited Japan May 11-17 for the Asia Sunday observance and also to explore the possibilities of relocating the General Secretariat office here. CCA had recently been expelled from its headquarters in Singapore under the Internal Security Act for allegedly 'meddling in the internal affairs' of the government (see JCAN No.651).

Rev. Ninan spoke at churches in Kyoto, Nagoya, Kofu and Tokyo during his brief stay and felt his Asia Sunday message was fairly well received by Japanese congregations. He spoke of the role of Japan as being a "safe haven for radical Christian thinking and action" in an Asian situation which is increasingly becoming



more openly repressive against people struggling for justice.

The theme's reference to the "mission of God" rather than the "mission of the Church" was a deliberate attempt to emphasize that God's work is not performed only through the Church nor even only through Christianity. Especially in the context of Asia, where Christians are but a small minority, there are "several movements outside the Church which carry values of the Kingdom of God." He stressed that Christians do not have a "monopoly over God" and that "the Church ought to recognize such movements and celebrate God's interaction with all people at all times."

As an example of scriptural evidence of God's preference for the oppressed and exploited, Rev. Ninan linked the struggles of Asian women with that of the biblical character Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian slave-girl who bore Abraham's first son Ishmael. Because Sarah could not bear an heir to the tribe of Abraham, Hagar was used like breeding stock for the sake of her Master and Mistress. She was scorned and persecuted by Sarah when she demanded her right to equality as the mother of Abraham's child. Later, when Sarah could finally bear Abraham a son (Isaac), Hagar and Ishmael were thrown out into the desert like spent and unwanted garbage to face certain death.

"Hagar was a victim of systems and circumstance", discriminated-against at all levels of that society. She was a foreigner, a slave and a woman and had no social significance in the tribe of Abraham. God, however, was with Hagar in her times of most urgent need. In time of despair and desperation, when Hagar, continually persecuted by the jealous Sarah, contemplates suicide, God provides her with the strength to choose life. In time of utter hopelessness, while exiled into the desert, God provides her and Ishmael with the material sustenance to maintain their lives.

The story of Hagar focuses attention on the inclusive nature of God. 'We have to see where our Lord is at work. Is God only in the houses of respectable Christians or is God in the wilderness

where the Hagars of our society are thrown out?"

"If we are able to follow God's footsteps, our involvement will become different and the Church will become the real body of Jesus Christ, bearing the same and suffering of the people, yet looking forward to the resurrection."

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### URGENT APPEAL

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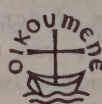
The Daishowa Paper Manufacturing Company Ltd, is a multinational conglomerate headquartered in Tokyo. At the present time it is building a kraft paper mill in Alberta, Canada which will be the largest one in all of Canada, and will feed Japan's voracious appetite for white paper. In the process, the Canadian natural environment will have to suffer from at least three main attacks.

1. Large scale logging will denude great areas of land, further emasculating the world's primeval forests and thereby compromising agricultural viability.
2. The traditional hunting grounds of the Lubicon Indian tribe will come under attack because of compromised ecosystems.
3. The production of bleached pulp requires the use of chlorine gas and chlorine dioxide which results in the release of dioxins which are known to radically attack human health.

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